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Letter dated 11 April 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in memory of the victims of the famine of the 1930s in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and to request that this statement be issued and circulated as a document of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly under agenda item 7 (see annex).

(*Signed*) Igor **Shcherbak**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 11 April 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation

Statement by the State Duma

2 April 2008

In memory of the victims of the famine of the 1930s in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation shares the sorrow of the peoples of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the terrible tragedy of the famine in the 1930s, which affected a large area of the Soviet Union.

Archive documents researched by contemporary historians reveal not only the scale but also the causes of the tragedy. Extreme methods were used to carry out the following objectives: the elimination of smallholders, the forced collectivization of agriculture and the expulsion of peasants from rural areas in order to form an army of workers for the accelerated industrialization of the country.

Many regions of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) (the Volga region, the Central Black Earth region, the Northern Caucasus, the Urals, the Crimea and part of Western Siberia) and of Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus suffered as a result of the famine caused by forced collectivization. Some 7 million people in those regions died of starvation and diseases related to malnutrition in 1932 and 1933.

The peoples of the USSR paid a huge price for industrialization and the enormous economic breakthrough which took place during those years. The Dneproges hydroelectric power station, the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk metallurgical complexes, the Ukrainian metallurgical giants Zaporozhstal, Azovstal and Krivorozhstal, the major coal mines in Donbass, Kuzbass and Karaganda, the Kharkov tractor plant and the Moscow and Gorky automobile plants — a total of more than 1,500 industrial enterprises, many of which are contributing even today to the economic development of the independent States of the former USSR — have become a lasting monument to the heroes and victims of the 1930s.

Seeking at any price to ensure the supply of food to the rapidly growing industrial centres, the leaders of the USSR and of the Union Republics employed repressive measures for the purpose of grain procurement, which greatly exacerbated the grave impact of the crop failure of 1932. However, there is no historical evidence to indicate that the famine was organized along ethnic lines. Millions of Soviet citizens, representatives of the diverse peoples and nationalities living mainly in agricultural areas of the country, were victims of the famine. The internationally recognized characteristics of genocide are not and cannot be ascribed to this tragedy, which should not be the subject of contemporary political speculation.

The State Duma reaffirms its backing for the joint statement by the delegations of a number of States Members of the United Nations, adopted at the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly in 2003, which expressed sympathy for the millions of victims of the tragedy, irrespective of their nationality.

The deputies of the State Duma, paying tribute to the memory of the victims of the 1930s famine in the USSR, strongly condemn the regime which disdained human life for the sake of economic and political objectives, and hereby declare unacceptable any attempts in the former Soviet States to revive totalitarian regimes that disregard the rights and lives of their citizens.